

# **COLLISION RESEARCH ASSOCIATES SUMMARY REPORT**

**Case Reference: Vetters v. DaimlerChrysler**

**CRA 05033**

**Collision Date:  
December 10, 2004**

**Location:  
Corpus Christi,  
Nueces County, Texas**

**Report prepared at the request of:**

**Mr. L. Matthew Dotin  
Sico, White & Braugh, L.L.P.**

**PREPARED:  
September 15, 2005**

**Mr. James R. Lock  
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## **SUMMARY REPORT**

### **Vetters v. DaimlerChrysler**

#### **PERSONAL INFORMATION**

Mr. James Lock is a motor vehicle transportation safety expert and traffic accident reconstructionist with Collision Research Associates (CRA), located in College Station, Texas. Mr. Lock has seventeen years of experience as a highway safety researcher and collision reconstructionist while at Texas A&M University, and more than twenty-seven years of experience conducting traffic collision investigations and reconstructions in research and litigation related matters. He has continuously conducted traffic collision investigations and reconstructions, collision analysis and vehicle tire-pavement friction research since 1977 for contractors including the U. S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Mr. Lock has taught traffic collision reconstruction to hundreds of engineers and police officers at various government agencies and academic institutions. Significant collision reconstruction and trial related activities have been conducted for sponsors including the U.S. Department of Justice, the State of Texas, the State of Missouri, the State of Pennsylvania, many other states, and private insurance groups, trucking companies and attorneys. He has been qualified as an expert in all aspects (vehicle, environment, and human) of collision reconstruction and has testified in state and federal courts in many states and in the Virgin Islands. His Curriculum Vita is attached to this report.

#### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

James Lock received this file from client, Mr. L. Matthew Dotin, Sico, White & Braugh, L.L.P., located in Corpus Christi, Texas. The case file was initiated with a letter and various documents received on April 25, 2005.

This investigation is brought about by a collision involving a single motor vehicle. The involved vehicle is a 2002 Dodge Durango. The collision occurred in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas.

Based on the information received thus far and the facts of the case, at approximately 6:22 a.m.. Mrs. Sharon Veters was found laying on the driveway of 6717 Pintail with severe head injuries. This location is across Pintail from the driveway to her home where she had left a few minutes earlier for work. Her 2002 Dodge Durango was found a few feet away, running with it's headlights on, in reverse gear and with all the doors shut. One of Mrs. Vetter's shoes was found on across Pintail and the other under the front of the vehicle at final rest. A cell phone and various pieces of mail and paper as well as a crushed pair of glasses were found where she lay. Possible witness/contact markings were found along the driver side of the vehicle. Mrs. Veters subsequently died as a result of her injuries.

#### **VEHICLE and DRIVER IDENTIFICATION**

The involved vehicle was a 2002 Dodge Durango. The Durango had a license plate of TX N90SSG and a reported VIN of 1B4HR48N82F104989. The vehicle was owned and driven daily by Mrs. Sharon Stockton Veters, a 58 year-old female from Corpus Christi, Texas. The Durango was not occupied at the time of the accident.

#### **ROADWAY DESCRIPTION AND INVESTIGATION**

The collision occurred at the 6700 block of Pintail Drive approximately 101 feet north of Baldpate Drive, at approximately 6:22 a.m., on December 10, 2004. This location is in Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas.

Pintail Drive is a residential street lined with houses and driveways. The roadway measures approximately 27 feet in width and is bordered by a six inch

concrete curb. The roadway is composed of asphaltic concrete, crowned in the center and relatively straight and level. There are no traffic control markings on the roadway. The roadside area consists of approximately seven feet of grass leading to an approximate four foot wide sidewalk.

Each house has a paved driveway leading to the roadway. The driveway at Mrs. Vettters' house, 6714 Pintail, is approximately 15 feet wide and has a negative slope towards the roadway. The driveway at 6717 Pintail is offset to the south by about one foot and also measures approximately 15 feet wide. Both driveways widen to approximately 22 feet wide at Pintail Drive.

## INVESTIGATION

The activities performed and the information considered to date include:

1. Police Accident Report;
2. Vehicle and scene photographs, received from attorney 04/25/05;
3. Total Station Scene Survey, by CRA 05/03/05;
4. Scene and vehicle inspection and photographs, by CRA 05/03/05;
5. Video of vehicle inspection, by CRA 05/03/05;
6. Plaintiffs' First Amended Complaint;
7. Deposition with exhibits of Michael Pena;
8. Deposition with exhibits of Michael Hernandez;
9. Deposition of Ruben Aceves;
10. Deposition with exhibits of Carolyn Atherton;
11. Deposition with exhibits of Ray Fernandez;
12. Obtained vehicle specifications; and
13. CRA Reconstruction.

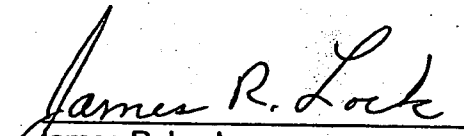
## SUMMARY OF OPINIONS

This report containing my opinions or inference is based on facts or data perceived by, reviewed by, or made known to me prior to the preparation of this report. The opinions herein are based on the information reviewed and collected as well as my education, experience and training in the field of collision reconstruction and highway safety. The facts, data and reconstruction methodologies used are of a type reasonably relied upon and applied by experts in the accident reconstruction field in forming opinions or inferences upon the subject collision investigation and reconstruction. Based on my review and analysis of this information referred to and listed above, I have formed the following opinions and conclusions.

1. The facts indicate that Mrs. Vettters backed her vehicle out of the garage and came to a stop with all or the front end of the vehicle on the driveway. Mrs. Vettters exited the vehicle and walked 17 - 22 feet to her mailbox located in front of her house. Mrs. Vettters left the engine running and likely put the gear selector in "Park". Mrs. Vettters retrieved the mail from the box. Had the gear selector not been put in park the vehicle would have immediately moved rearward due to the downward slope of the driveway and/or the engine torque.
2. The facts indicate that one of Mrs. Vettters shoes was found in the roadway approximately four feet from the end of the driveway.
3. Based on the path of travel of the vehicle, it is most probable that Mrs. Vettters partially entered the vehicle. This is based on the fact that the front wheels were steered to the right approximately 18 degrees. This 18 degrees of front wheel steer angle would require approximately 350 degrees of steering wheel rotation with the 17.5:1 steer ratio. A portion of the steering input may have occurred as the vehicle rolled over Mrs. Vettters.

4. Mrs. Veters was not able to regain control of the vehicle and did not bring the vehicle to a stop. The facts indicate Mrs. Veters fell to the pavement as the vehicle entered the driveway across the street from her driveway. If, in fact, Mrs. Veters had partially entered the vehicle in an attempt to stop it, she fell out of the vehicle and the driver's door passed over her.
5. With Mrs. Veters on the pavement in the driveway, the vehicle continued to move on its curved path. The left front tire struck Mrs. Veters causing a severe avulsion of skin on the right side of her head. The vehicle continued to move rearward mounting the sidewalk and grass area in the front yard of 6717 Pintail.
6. The vehicle came to rest with the front end over the driveway edge line. The door of the vehicle was found closed at final rest and the vehicle was found with the engine running and the gear selector in the reverse position. Mrs. Veters continued to lay in the driveway in serious medical condition. Mrs. Veters later died from her injuries.
7. The cause of the injuries received by Mrs. Veters was the inadvertent movement of her vehicle and when confronted with the sudden emergency, her diligent effort in attempting to stop the out of control vehicle.

Please understand that my opinions are based on the information that has been received, collected, and reviewed. I understand that discovery is still in progress. As more information becomes available, it will be reviewed, and if necessary, I will supplement or revise my opinions and produce an updated report.

  
James R. Lock  
Collision Research Associates